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ABSTRACT

This student booklet, one in a series of seven instructional materials dealing with the history and culture of Armenian Americans, provides elementary school children with a description of Armenia today. Following a brief discussion of Armenia's recent history, students examine numerous captioned photographs that describe places, people, and events in Armenia. The photographs consist mainly of people engaged in work, playing music, singing, and at school and church. The city life of Yerevan, the capital of Soviet Armenia, is depicted by its streets, market, factories, monuments, cultural center, and churches. The rural life is depicted in the village of Voskevaz where people are seen working in the fields and herding sheep. Photographs of the Byurakan Observatory, ancient manuscripts, and poet Hovhanes Shiraz are also included. A tape of sounds related to the photographs may be obtained through the Armenian Relief Society, 212 Stuart Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. The book may be used independently of the other materials in the series. (KC)

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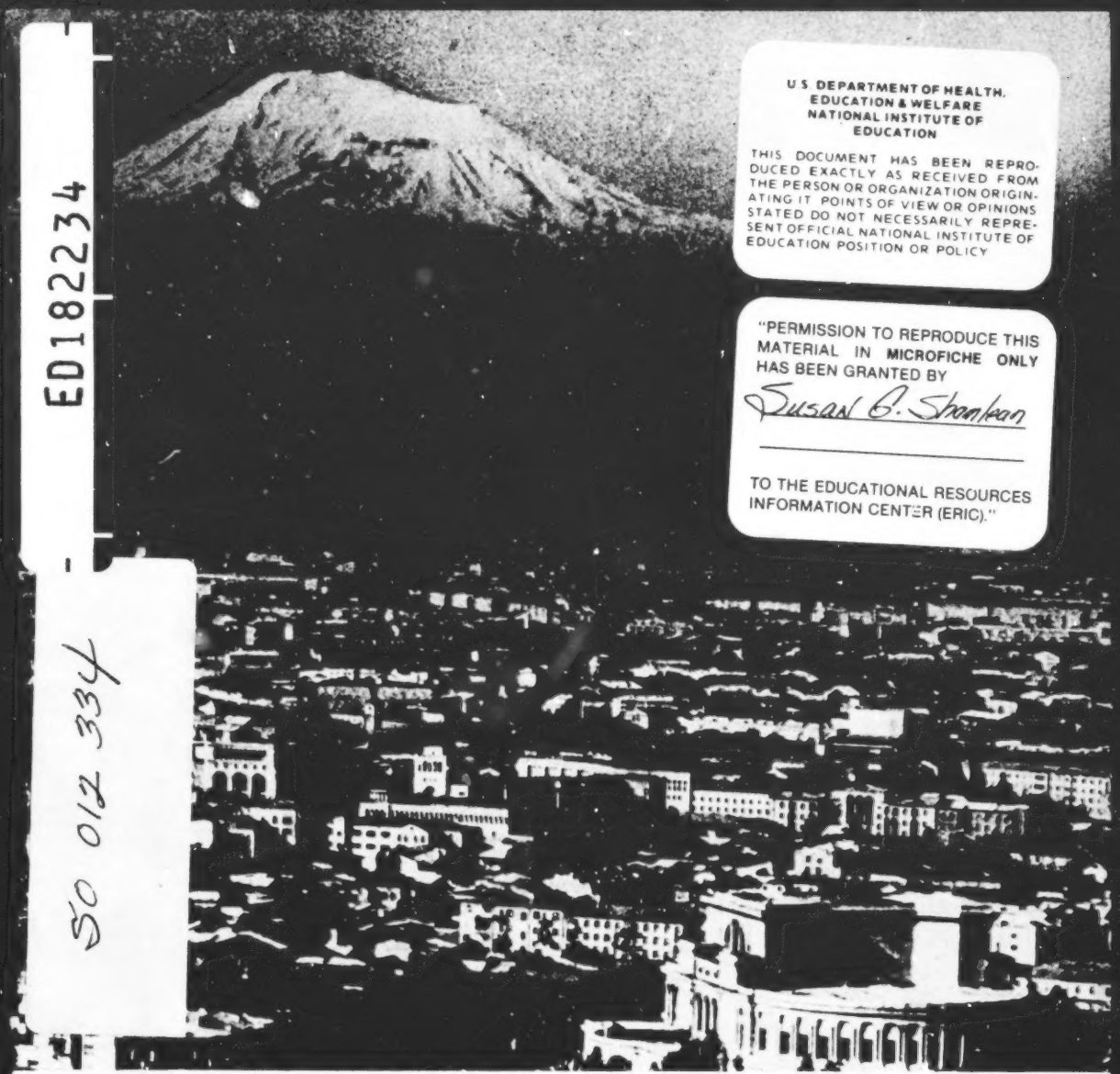

Sights and Sounds of Armenia

MOSSIK HACOBIAN
A.R.S. ARMENIAN ETHNIC HERITAGE PROJECT

2

Before you see the "Sights"

Have you ever thought of going to Armenia? Have you ever wondered what it's like there? How much do you know about Armenia?

Beginning on page 3 is a short description of Armenia's recent history. The main purpose of this booklet and its accompanying tape recording, however, is to give you an idea of what Armenia is like today. You will see photographs that describe a series of places, people and events in Armenia. After you have looked at the pictures and read their captions, play the tape and see if you can point out where the sounds you hear were recorded. Detailed instructions are on page 20.

In the classroom you can make this a contest between students individually or in teams. At home you can try it out on your relatives and friends to see how well they can recognize these sights and sounds from the other side of the world—these sights and sounds of Armenia.

Note to teachers and parents:

The material presented here is most appropriate for children in grades 6 through 9.

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ARMENIA IS LOCATED between the Black and Caspian Seas along the southwestern border of the U.S.S.R. in an area known as the Caucasus.

Armenia Today

The Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic or Soviet Armenia is one of the smallest of the 16 republics of the U.S.S.R. Of the estimated 6 million Armenians worldwide, 2½ million, or just under half, make their homes here. The 11,500 square mile territory of Soviet Armenia is only a small portion of historically Armenian lands that stretch into what is now known as eastern Turkey.

The history of the Armenian people goes back over 3,000 years. Many of Armenia's ancient neighbors and conquerers such as Babylon and Assyria no longer exist. But Armenia, having faced many empires and much oppression, including the first massacre of the 20th century in the hands of Turkey's "Young Turk" government, has survived and flourished.

Armenia's capital is the beautiful city of Yerevan. Older than ancient Rome, Yerevan has emerged during this century as a modern and busy city of 900,000 people.

THE INDEPENDENT ARMENIAN REPUBLIC: 1918-1920

Before Soviet Armenia there was the Independent Armenian Republic. Without it there may not have been a Soviet Armenia today. The Independent Republic was the first instance of self-government in Armenia in modern times for most of Armenia had been under Ottoman (today's Turkey) rule for over 500 years.

Armenia declared its independence in 1918 near the end of World War I; it was a bad time for it. In fact, Armenian leaders did not want independence for then they would have to face the Turks alone. They had sought instead protection for Armenia first from Russia and later by forming a short-lived federation with neighboring Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Turkish armies were pushing toward Yerevan in eastern Armenia after having destroyed western or Turkish Armenia. Abandoned by their neighbors and with no place to retreat, Armenian forces and civilian volunteers made their last stand against the Turks. All they had left was the region around Yerevan, and their survival as a people was at stake.

The battle line stretched north and west of Yerevan through Karakilisa, Bash Abaran, and Sardarabad. Armenians fought hard and succeeded in forcing the larger enemy forces into retreat. Within a week a treaty was signed and Turkey recognized Armenia. The victory at Sardarabad has been immortalized in Soviet Armenia with the construction of an elaborate monument complex at the sight of the battle.

While many of the terms of the 1918 treaty were to Turkey's advantage, the agreement ended the fighting and gained the Armenians Turkey's recognition of their statehood. The treaty allowed the Armenians a tiny territory. Chances for the Republic's survival were slim but Armenia hoped to preserve its independence with the help of the United States, the European powers, and neighboring Russia.

The new country housed and protected Armenians who had survived the frightful Turkish massacres of 1915. Armenia was plagued by disease and starvation everywhere. Amid this chaos Armenia tried to establish a democratic form of government. Women were given the right to vote (even before this happened in the United States); schools were organized offering free education to everyone; a legislature was elected and a system of courts and juries was established.

The United States recognized Armenia in 1920 and called it its "Little Ally" in the fight against the Germans and the Turks during World War I.

Later that same year the Republic's life was cut short. After two years of Herculean efforts, the Armenians faced menacing Turkish armies in the west and Communist Russia from the east. Recognizing the futility of its situation, Armenia succumbed, gave up much of its territories to Turkey, and became a part of the U.S.S.R.

Despite its short life, the Republic preserved Armenian nationhood and existence in the Caucasus and paved the way for the development of Soviet Armenia as we know it today.

ARMENIANS AT PEACE

The Independent Republic and Soviet Armenia represent a new era in Armenia's long history. For the first time in centuries Armenians have been able to live in peace in their homeland. During this period they have made great advances in education and science, in the various arts, in sports, and in the development of their country.

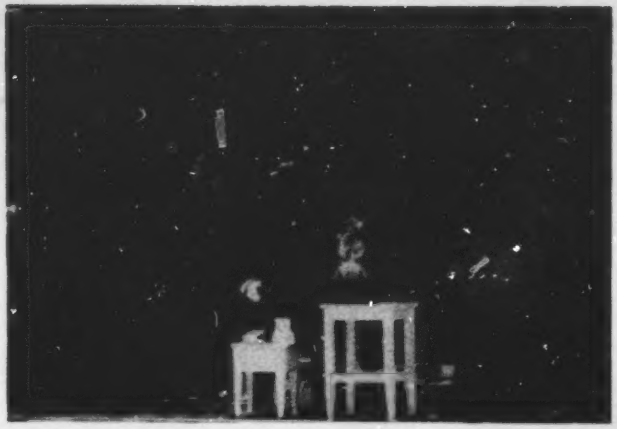
Armenians, an independent-minded people with a long tradition of their own religion and culture, do face problems within the political structure of the Soviet Union. However, they seem to have achieved a balance between their responsibilities to the state and their own national aspirations, and are currently enjoying the highest standard of living they have known in their history.

Sights of Armenia

See page 20 for "Sounds of Armenia" and activity instructions

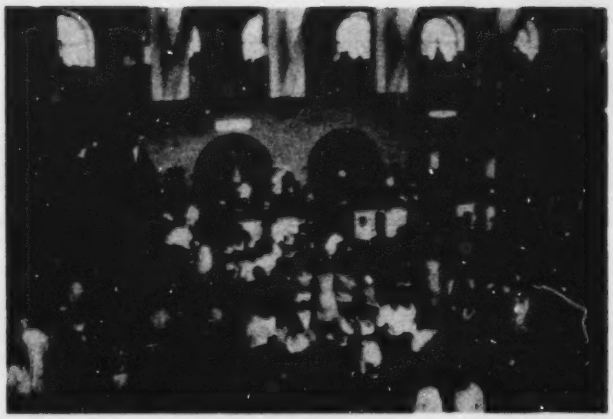
Yerevan, capital of Soviet Armenia, is blessed with an abundance of fresh spring water from surrounding mountains. Most streetcorners have drinking fountains and many public squares are adorned with fountains.

Near the center of Yerevan is another set of fountains and a shallow pool where children splash around during the summer heat.



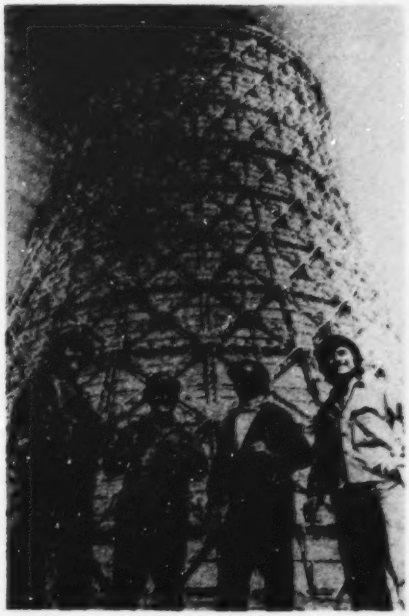
In another part of the city a young girl gives her doll a bath.

Soldiers and civilians buy fruit drinks served from a barrel. A drink costs 3 to 12 kopeks per cup (or 5 to 15 cents) depending on its size.



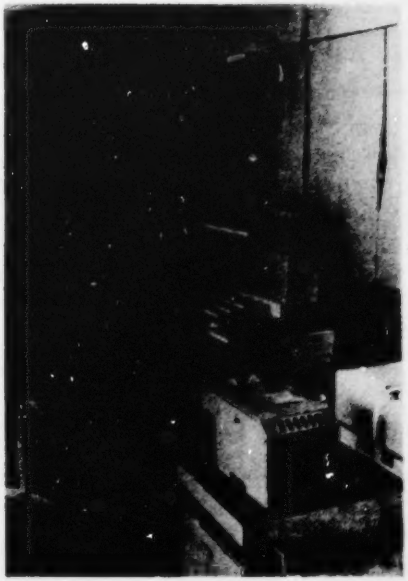
Nearby is one of Yerevan's covered markets where villagers and farmers sell better quality fruits and vegetables grown on their private plots of government-provided land.

The cities of Yerevan and Kirovakan (in the north) are major centers of textile production in Armenia.

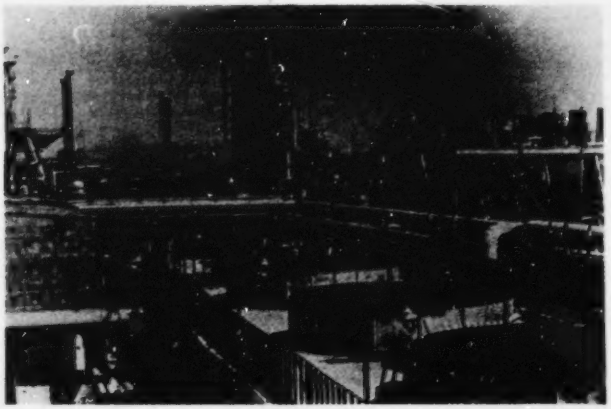


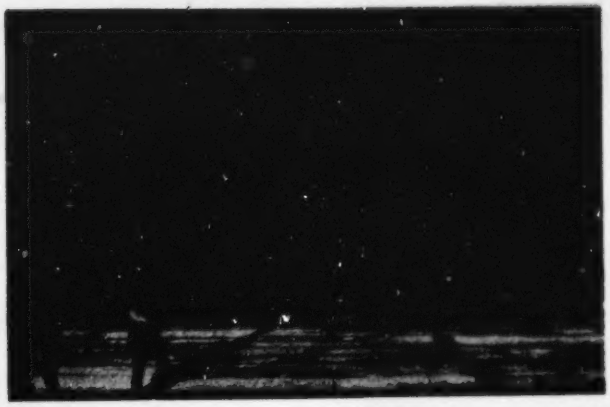
Workers take a break during construction of the first atomic power plant in the Caucasus, located outside Yerevan.

Armenia's Nayiri-3 and Herazdan-3 computers are among the best produced in the U.S.S.R.



This is a synthetic rubber plant in Yerevan. The city's many factories are causing serious air-pollution problems in Yerevan.





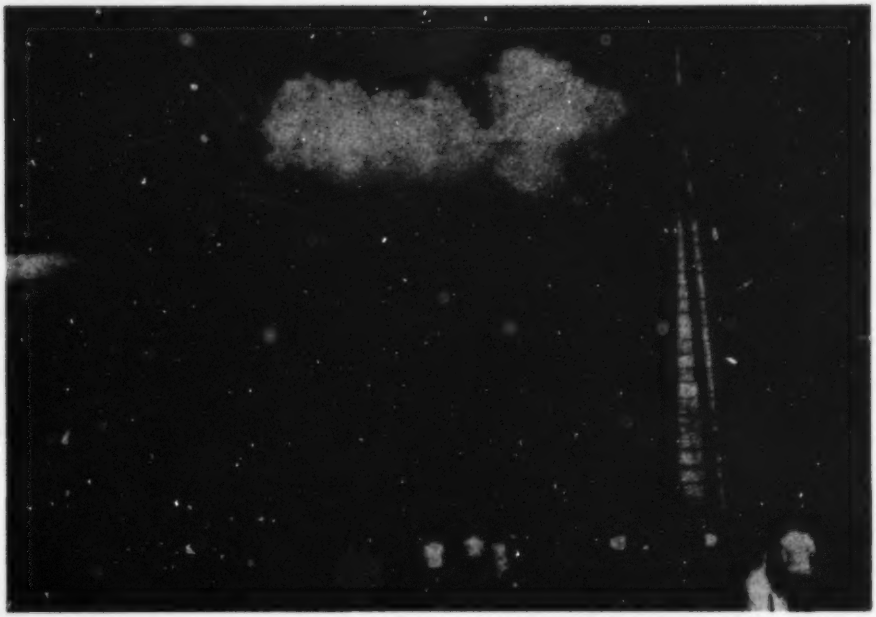
A line of stone eagles at Sardarabad keep a watchful eye over Armenian lands with their backs confidently turned to Armenia's age-old enemies.

Soviet Armenia owes its existence in part to the Independent Armenian Republic which preceded it just after World War I. This belltower is part of a monument at Sardarabad, only 8 miles from the Turkish border, about two hours' drive from Yerevan. It was here that in 1918 Armenians won an important victory over the Turks and helped pave the way for the declaration of Armenia's independence.

In Yerevan, the square in front of the train station features the statue of legendary hero, Sasountzi Davit (David of Sasoun).

"From stone and boulder
red sparks did fly,
David's horse hovered,
as birds in the sky.
He came in a cloud,
with unsheathed sword,
Over Kalif's camp eagle-
like he soared."

(From David of Sasoun, by H. Toumanian; Oshagan Publications)



On a hill rising over the Herazdan River and overlooking the city of Yerevan, Armenians have built a touching and beautiful monument commemorating the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks.

An eternal flame burns in one part of the monument accompanied by mournful music from the Armenian liturgy.

The center of cultural life in Yerevan is the Opera House and Philharmonic Hall surrounded by a pleasant park where children and adults meet, play, talk, walk and the elderly compete in checkers and backgammon (called tavloo in Armenia).

Inside the opera house audiences enjoy lavish productions of favorite Armenian operas such as "Anush" and "Almast."

Each year hundreds of young Armenian musicians begin to develop their talents in Yerevan's conservatory in all areas of music including folk and classical music, voice training, composition, and the study of various musical instruments.

Folk music is one of the most popular forms of entertainment. Folk concerts are always well-attended. Singer Roupen Matevosian is seen here (left photo) practicing before a concert in Yerevan. The instrument shown here is called a Kanon and has 72 strings that are plucked with the index fingers.

Other instruments being tuned (above) for the concert are a tar, and oud and a kemancha.

Rock 'n' Roll music has become very popular with young Armenians. Many bands perform in hotels, nightclubs and youth hostels, and many new song-writers are writing new rock songs--in Armenian.

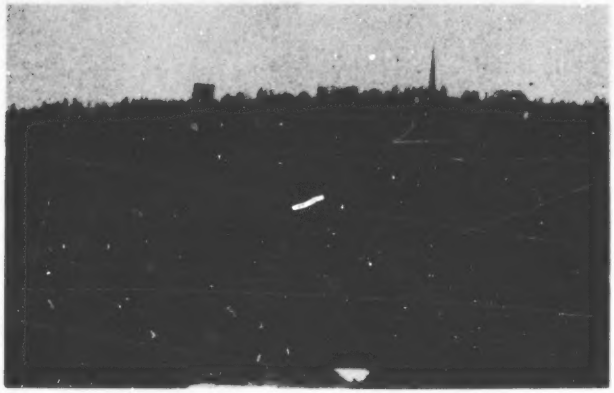
In little cafes or in each other's homes young people gather to sing and dance in a more relaxed and intimate atmosphere.

These students are attending an English class.

Yerevan takes pride in its schools, universities and institutes. This is one of Yerevan's many elementary schools. Here, in addition to Armenian and Russian, children study English.

A student describes his summer vacation in English. A map of the United States is behind him on the wall.

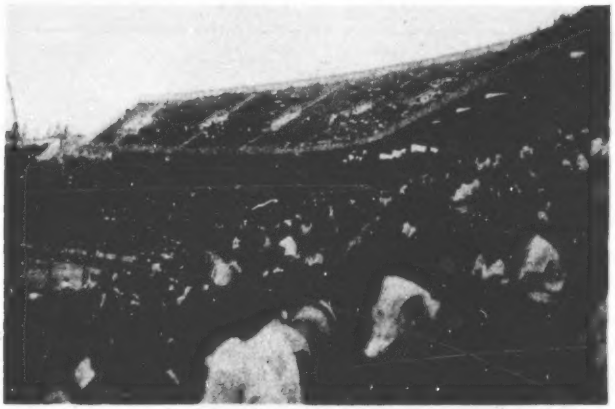
On the chalkboard is the day's lesson on English grammar and a sign which says, "English please!"



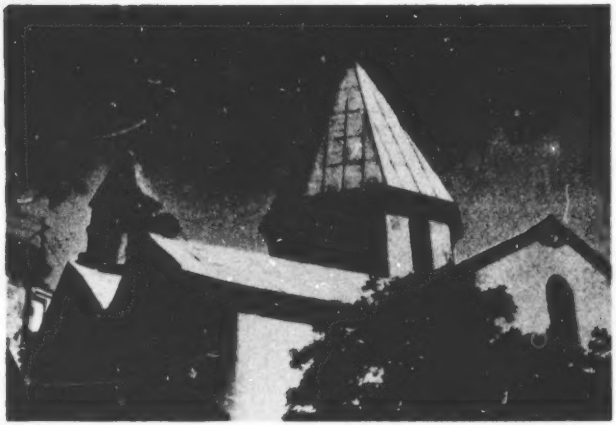
All Armenians are proud of Yerevan's champion Ararat soccer team. This is their new 70,000 seat stadium along the Herazdan River, not far from the center of the city.

On the day of the soccer match, surrounding streets are blocked to car traffic and soccer fans walk the last few blocks to the stadium.

Souvenir photo from Ararat's exhibition game in Providence, Rhode Island in 1974.



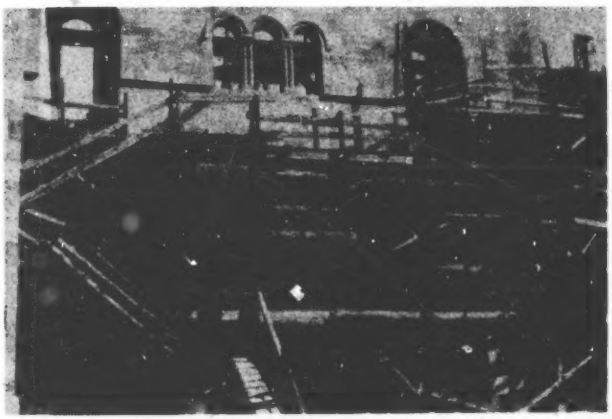
Soccer fans in Armenia get very excited and emotional as they cheer or boo players of the Ararat team. Traditionally not many women attend these games.



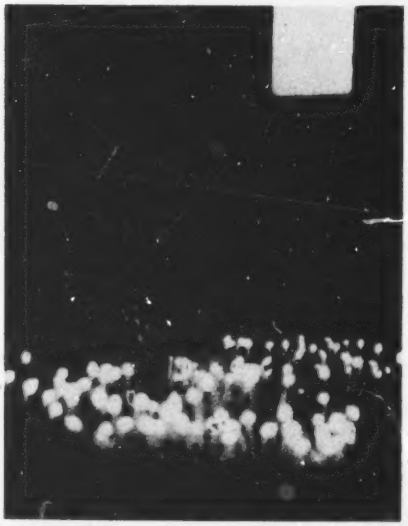
Yerevan has three churches that have regular Sunday services. This is the St. Sarkis church located across the Herazdan River from the soccer stadium. The church was renovated recently with new stone outer walls and roof made of toof (or tufa), a rose-colored volcanic rock found plentifully in Armenia's mountains. This is the material most used in building construction in Armenia.

A rotary grinding machine first smooths out one face of the stone block. This is the face you will see when the wall is finished.

Expert stonemasons then use chisels, axes and hammers to square off the block and taper the edges before it can be mortared in the wall.

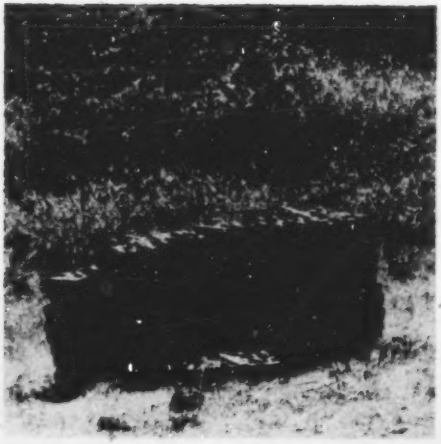


The mother church of all Armenian churches is the Echmiatzin Cathedral in the town of Echmiatzin, less than one hour's drive from Yerevan.



Worshippers from Yerevan and other cities flock to this cathedral every Sunday to pray and to light candles.

Slightly farther away from Yerevan is the village of Voskevaz, one of many farming villages in Armenia. Here two women are picking their fall crop of tomatoes.



The tomatoes are put in crates and sent to Yerevan by truck. There they are sold at fruit and vegetable stands.

During a break in the work, one woman entertains the others with a folk song.

There are other villages where tha main task is to raise sheep and cattle. The village of Amirkheyir is one of these and is located in the mountains surrounding Lake Sevan. The people who live here are Turks from neighboring Azerbaijan.

This 61-year old Azerbaijani shepherd, along with his two younger brothers, brings the herds up the mountain from his village below early each morning. As the animals graze the shepherds often sing.

The youngest brother begins rounding up the animals in late afternoon for the return trip to the village.

The giant roof of Armenia's Byurakan observatory on the slopes of Mt. Aragatz slides open with the flick of a switch to expose the stars to its newest telescope (right) housed in the building shown at left. One project at Byurakan is monitoring outer space for possible signals from other civilizations.

The greatest collection of ancient handwritten Armenian books and bibles, many with beautiful miniature paintings, is stored in Yerevan's Matenadaran, or manuscript depository, named after Mesrop Mashtotz, whose statue greets visitors as they approach the building.

Scholars and researchers from all over the world come here to examine Armenian translations of ancient Greek and Latin writings whose originals no longer exist.

The largest manuscript at the Matenadaran was completed in 1204 A.D. and weighs over 70 lbs. More than 600 calf hides were used to make the parchment for this book.

As modern as Yerevan is today, its history goes back almost 3,000 years. In the southern part of the city stands the hill on which once stood the fortress or citadel of the ancient Urartu city of Erebuni, founded in 782 B.C. At the foot of the hill there is now a small museum (shown here) with artifacts sound during the excavations of the citadel.

Yerevan's International Airport, with Mt. Ararat in the distance, each year greets thousands of tourists from all over the world. Many Armenians from the U.S. and other countries come through here to visit their ancestral homeland. Also each year, many other Armenians come through here from villages and towns in the Middle East to settle in Armenia permanently.

Poet Hovhanes Shiraz has written many poems about Armenia and the Armenian people. In one poem addressed to Armenians who live outside Armenia Shiraz tells them to come home to Armenia:

"Enough of foreign bread.
Enough of running sea to sea.
Come home to Armenia.
Come to Masis . . .
Yerevan looks you in the eye.
Ararat looks you in the heart
and commands:
Come home . . .
Let us join Armenian genius
to Armenian spirit
And save this world of ours
together."

(Excerpts from translation by Diana Der Hovanessian)

Sounds of Armenia

This pamphlet is accompanied by a cassette recording with sounds related to some of the sights described. Most of the sounds were recorded in Armenia.

Following are two suggested activities for the student in the classroom or for the family at home using the pamphlet and the recording together.

I. Can you identify these sounds?

The 18 sounds contained in the recording are listed below with very brief descriptions. Next to each sound on the list are names or descriptions of three places or activities pictured in the pamphlet.

Instructions

1. Read through the booklet (note to teachers: this could be given as a homework assignment).
2. On a separate piece of paper list the numbers 1 to 18.
3. Play the tape and listen to each sound very carefully.
4. As you hear each sound, you have an average of 35 seconds to look back in the pamphlet at the three choices listed for each sound below and select the correct place or activity that goes with that sound.
5. List your choice next to the appropriate number on your worksheet.
6. After you have heard all 18 sounds and marked your worksheet, check your list with the one at the bottom of page 22.

Sounds

1. Fast music: a) At the opera, page 10; b) Shepherd singing, page 17; c) Band, page 11.

2. Paper or pages: a) Looking through books at the Matenadaran, page 18; b) Packing fruit in the market, page 6; c) Paging through sheet music at the conservatory, page 10.

3. "Der Voghormia" (Lord forgive us): a) Woman singing in the village, page 16; b) Mournful music at the monument, page 9; c) From the opera "Anush," page 10.

4. Water: a) Girl bathing her doll, page 6; b) Fountains in Yerevan's main square, page 5; c) Water flowing under Sasountzi Davit's statue, page 8.

5. Crowd noise: a) Audience at the opera, page 10; b) Children during recess, page 12; c) Soccer fans, page 13.

6. Striking sounds: a) The Nayiri-3 computer in action, page 7; b) Tomatoes being crated in the village, page 16; c) Mason shaping stone, page 14.

7. Song: a) Workers singing during break, page 7; b) Young people in the cafe, page 11; c) Soccer fans singing victory song, page 13.

8. English conversation: a) Astronomer describing Byurakan Observatory, page 18; b) Announcements at Yerevan's airport, page 19; c) English class, page 12.

9. Violin and piano: a) Conservatory class, page 10; b) Rock band, page 11; c) Mournful music at the monument, page 9.

10. Yelling and singing: a) Soccer fans cheering Ararat, page 13; b) Shepherd near Lake Sevan, page 17; c) Tomato picker during break, page 16.

11. Whirring sound: a) Byurakan's roof openning, page 18; b) Jet landing at the airport, page 19; c) Textile plant in Kirovakan, page 7.

12. Soprano: a) Singing in the cafe, page 11; b) Part of Echmiatzin mass, page 15; c) From the opera "Anush," page 10.

13. Strings and voice: a) Tuning up for concert, page 11; b) Before the opera, page 10; c) At the conservatory, page 10.

14. Noise: a) Rubber plant, page 7; b) Planes taking off at the airport, page 19; c) Stone-grinding machine, page 14.

15. "Soorp-Soorp" (Holy-Holy): a) Choir at Echmiatzin, page 15; b) Folk concert in Yerevan, page 11; c) From the opera "Almast," page 10.

16. Woman singing: a) Solo from St. Sarkis mass, page 14; b) Rock band, page 11; c) Woman in tomato field, page 16.

17. Man speaking: a) Shepherd talking with his brother, page 17; b) Shiraz's message, page 19; c) Soccer fans discussing Ararat's game, page 13.

18. Song about Yerevan-Erebuni: a) Urartu citadel, page 19; b) Conservatory choir, page 10; c) Folk concert in Yerevan, page 11.

22

II. What do you think about . . .

(Note to teachers: The following are some suggested topics for classroom discussion. Some of them are also appropriate as essay topics.)

1. **Schools in Armenia**—Would you like to study in Armenia? Do you think you would have trouble with the language?

2. **Turkish villages in Armenia**—Why should Armenia allow Turks to live in peace in Armenia? Should Armenians try to be good neighbors with the Turks?

3. **Old handwritten bibles and books**—What can we learn from them? Do you have anything in your home that's more than 100 years old? What can you learn from it about your family's history?

4. **The project at Byurakan looking for other civilizations in the universe**—Do you think such a project is useful to people on this earth? Do you think there may be other Armenians in the universe?

5. **Armenia's 3,000 year history**—How much older is Armenia compared to the United States? If the lives of your great-grandparents, your grandparents, your parents and you span about 100 years, how many generations would be needed to span 3,000 years?

6. **Hovhanes Shiraz's message**—Do you think Armenians living outside Armenia should move to Armenia or should they stay where they are? Why?

7. **Other subjects in this booklet**—What is your impression of Armenia? What new things did you learn about Armenia?

ANSWER KEY FOR SOUNDS LISTED ON PAGES 20-21:
1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-b, 5-c, 6-c, 7-b, 8-c, 9-a, 10-b, 11-a, 12-c, 13-a, 14-b, 15-a, 16-c, 17-b, 18-a.

Armenian Ethnic Heritage Project

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The Free Republic of Armenia, 1918-1968, by Leo Sarkisian.

The Armenian Question Before the Peace Conference, (A memorandum presented by Avetis Aharonian, President of the Delegation of the Independent Republic, and Boghos Nubar, President of the Armenian National Delegation), The Armenian Review, Autumn 1974.

PHOTO AND MAP SOURCES:

Page 1 (cover photo), Soviet Life, March 1968, page 21.

Page 3, map of Armenia from pamphlet entitled "The Free Republic of Armenia, 1918-1968," by Leo Sarkisian, May 28, 1968.

Page 7, top left, Armenia: Cradle of Civilization by D.M. Lang, page 294; top right, the Armenian Reporter, Jan. 8, 1976, page 14, Novosti News Agency; bottom left, Armenia: Cradle of Civilization by D.M. Lang, page 34; bottom right, Soviet Armenia (Sovetakan Hayastan), January 1970, page 23.

Page 10, top left, Intourist travel brochure entitled "Visit Armenia;" top right, Ararat Quarterly, Autumn 1974, page 49, photographer Arthur Tcholakian.

Page 18, top left, Soviet Armenia (Sovetakan Hayastan), August 1972, page 6; top right, Novosti News Agency, courteousy of the Armenian Mirror Spectator; bottom right, The UNESCO Courier, July 1973, page 26.

All other photos from Armenian Friends Coalition, 1970, '71 and '72 trips to Armenia, photographers Robert Maksudian and Larry Markosian.

Materials available from the A.R.S. Ethnic Heritage Project

1. **MY ORIGINS: Recording Family History**

   An introduction to the ideas of generations, family tree and plotting one's own family history and migration route to America. Includes worksheets and puzzle.

2. **LAND OF THE ARMENIANS**

   A study of Armenia's mountains, lakes, rivers and plateaus through the construction of a relief map. Includes worksheets and photographs.

3. **DISCOVERING HISTORY THROUGH ARTIFACTS: Kingdom of Tigran II "The Great"**

   How we can learn about earlier times by closely studying the artifacts they have left behind. Includes worksheets and photographs.

4. **ELEMENTS OF ARMENIAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE**

   A study of Armenian church architecture through the construction of a model of a 7th century church. Includes worksheets and photographs.

5. **KHATCHKARS: Armenian Stone Crosses**

   Learning about a uniquely Armenian sculptural form by carving a plaster khatchkar (stone cross). Includes photographs.

6. **MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN COSTUMES**

   A study of Medieval Armenian history and its costumes. Includes figures and costumes to be colored and cut out.

7. **SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF ARMENIA**

   Learning about Armenia today by matching sounds on a cassette recording with sights pictured in a booklet about Soviet Armenia.

8. **THEY CAME FROM ARARAT**

   A filmstrip on the origins and development of the Armenian community in America. Includes accompanying recorded narration and music.